RUSSIAN BANK

(OR CHARITY)

A GAME FOR TWO PLAYERS

WITH

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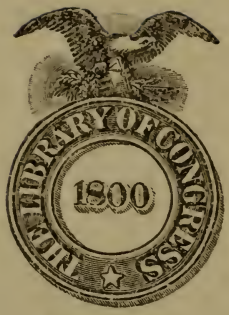
R. [illegible] FOSTER



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FOSTER'S
RUSSIAN BANK

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

PIRATE BRIDGE
FOSTER ON AUCTION
AUCTION MADE EASY

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

FOSTER'S RUSSIAN BANK

(OR CRAPETTE)

A GAME FOR TWO PLAYERS

With Complete Description and Illustrative Lists

By

R. F. FOSTER

AUTHOR OF

"FOSTER ON AUCTION," "PIRATE BRIDGE,"
"AUCTION MADE EASY," ETC.
INVENTOR OF THE ELEVEN RULE AND THE
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NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

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GV1295
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APR -1 1920

Printed in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

WHILE there are at least a dozen excellent card games for two persons, the average player of to-day has undoubtedly outgrown such simple contests as All-fours, Hearts, Euchre, or Rum. It is true that Piquet, Écarté, Cribbage, Casino, and Pinochle afford a little more intellectual amusement, but they lack the infinite variety which is vital to the continued popularity of any game, and in all of them luck is too predominating an element.

There has been of late years a persistent and growing demand for a

good card game for two persons, such as man and wife, which shall be at once simple in its construction, interesting in its developments, full of variety and surprises, and at the same time shall not require such an amount of highly specialized technical knowledge as, for example, Auction Bridge. It must be a game in which one can make mistakes without being exposed to the criticism of a partner; a game that one can play well or ill, and still enjoy it. We play cards for the excitement and amusement, as a pastime and a pleasure.

As there seems always to be a supply to meet every demand, we find that Russian Bank has lately been coming into vogue as an excellent game for two persons; especially those who want a little more excitement than Euchre, a little less luck

than Pinochle, but sufficient intellectual exercise to satisfy both the average and the most exacting card player.

Russian Bank is a gradual development from various forms of Solitaire, especially one which has been known since 1910 as Crapette, which seems to be a coined word. The game provides excellent training for both observation and judgment and has many surprising alternatives, owing to the infinite possibilities of the distribution of two packs of fifty-two cards each. It is impossible for any two games of Russian Bank to be even remotely alike, and even with exactly the same distribution of the cards the outcome may vary in countless ways. Another point in its favor is that each player is as much concerned in his opponent's moves as in

his own, the interest never flagging for a moment.

In addition to its attractions, Russian Bank has proved to be a refuge for the many sensitive persons who have become a little tired of the fault-finding partners that are so common at the bridge table. One may have a partner at Russian Bank, but he is simply an advisor, whose counsels may be taken or rejected at pleasure, after openly discussing their possibilities.

It is with a view to bringing the game to the notice of the card-playing public, and at the same time clarifying its laws and bringing out the beauties of its play, that the following pages have been written.

R. F. Foster.

The Savage Club, London,
1920

FOSTER'S
RUSSIAN BANK

FOSTER'S RUSSIAN BANK

DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME

The more common form of the game is played with two packs of fifty-two cards each, having backs of different colors, such as red and blue; but many persons prefer the shorter pack, of thirty-two, or thirty-six cards, in order to get quicker action and shorter games. As the same principles apply to each game, whether the cards run from the ace and deuce up to the queen and king, or from the six or seven up to the

king and ace, the following description will be confined to the full pack, fifty-two cards, running from the ace, as a foundation, to the king, which ends the sequence.

There are only two active players, who attend to all such matters as shuffling, cutting and dealing, and who make the actual plays; but by agreement either or both of them may have a duly-appointed advisor, agreed to by the adversary, with whom plays may be openly discussed, in the hearing of the opponent, before each play is made.

One of the packs is shuffled and spread, face down, and each active player draws a card, the lower having the choice of seats and packs, and having the right to begin the play. The cards rank from the king and queen down to the deuce and ace.

Ties cut again, the suits having no rank.

Supposing the packs to be blue and red, and the lower cut having chosen the red, he shuffles the blue pack for his opponent, while the opponent shuffles the red pack. Each then cuts the pack he has just shuffled, and passes it over to his opponent.

Each player then deals off twelve cards, one at a time and face down, into a pile at his right. These twelve cards constitute his "stock." He then deals the next four cards face up, to his left, and on a line between himself and his opponent. Sufficient space must be left between these two rows of cards for two other rows, in which the "foundations" will be placed later on. These eight cards, lying face up, form the "tableau."

The remaining 36 cards are laid, face down, at the player's left, and are known as his "hand."

The player who has acquired the right to play first begins by moving any ace which may be face up among the eight exposed cards in the tableau, and placing it in one of the eight spaces reserved for the foundations. These aces will form starters for building up, in sequence and suit, from the ace to the king. All aces must be taken from the tableau immediately, and any cards in sequence and suit with them must be placed upon them before another card is touched. Building upon the foundations is compulsory, but any further transposition of the cards in the tableau is optional with the player.

The movement of any other card, when a play upon the foundations is

feasible, entitles the opponent to call a stop, and to take his turn to play immediately. It is highly important to watch very closely for "stops," as they are frequently overlooked. A stop may be called the moment the player in error puts his fingers upon any card other than one which should be played on the foundations, even if that card is not moved.

When there is no further play possible upon the foundations, the player turns his attention to the remainder of the tableau. He may build upon any card in the tableau by placing upon it a card of a different color, red on black, or black on red, but in descending sequence; a six on a seven, a queen on a king, and so on. Only one card may be removed at a time, and if there are already two or more in any pile in

the tableau, the top card which is face up on that pile is the only one that can be moved. After that has been taken, the next one that is face up is available. Cards once placed on the ace foundations cannot be touched again under any circumstances. The transpositions in the tableau are at the option of the player, who may select among several, or may refuse to make plays that are possible, should he deem it better to leave the cards as they are.

Having no further moves to make with the cards in sight, the player turns up the top card of his stock (the twelve cards lying face down on his right). If this card is playable on any of the foundations, it must be placed there at once. Otherwise it may be placed in any vacant space in the tableau, or in descending se-

quence on any card of a different color in the tableau.

As long as the player can dispose of the cards he turns up from his stock, or can make moves among the cards in the tableau and then return to his stock and play from it, he continues to turn up cards, one at a time. As soon as a card is turned up that is not playable, or that he declines to play, it must be left face up on the top of his stock. If a space is open, which he declines to fill from his stock, he is "stopped," and his opponent plays. If there is no space, he turns his attention to the thirty-six cards lying face down on his left, which constitute his "hand."

Proceeding to turn up these cards, one at a time, as long as he can play, he continues until he comes to a point where he either cannot or will not

make a move. The last card turned up from his hand is then laid face up on the table between his hand and his stock, and is the beginning of his "discard pile."

If there is a space in the tableau, the player may refuse to fill that space with a card from his stock; but if he refuses to fill it with the last card turned up from his hand, preferring to put it on his discard pile, he cannot afterward play that card into a space, as cards from either of the discard piles cannot be played into spaces under any circumstances. Should there be a space in the tableau which the player refuses to fill from his stock when able to do so, he must acknowledge himself stopped, as he is not allowed to turn up any cards from his hand while he can still play into a space from his stock.

When from any cause the player is stopped, it becomes the turn of his adversary to play, and this player has not only the eight places in the tableau at his disposal, together with the foundations, if any have been started, but he can play upon his opponent's stock or discard under the following conditions.

Before placing any card from his own hand, stock, or discard, he may take any card from the tableau and play it upon his opponent's stock or discard in ascending or descending sequence in the same suit. Suppose the top card of the opponent's discard or stock is the eight of spades. Upon that card may be placed either the seven or nine of spades, and on that again, either the six or ten. Opportunities to release cards by taking advantage of this privilege are fre-

quently overlooked. The play upon the opponent's discard or stock is optional.

After making whatever plays he wishes, either by moving cards in the tableau, or otherwise, he turns up the top card of his stock, and continues to turn up, one at a time, from his stock, as long as he can play. When he reaches a card that he either cannot or will not play, if there is no space open for that card, he turns up the top card from the thirty-six on his left, which constitute his hand, and continues to play by turning up cards one at a time, until he is stopped. The last card from his hand must either be played, or laid out as the first of his discard pile.

It is hardly necessary to say that if the cards turned up from the hand, or the shifts made in the tableau,

should free the top card of the player's stock, he is at liberty to return to his stock; but he is not obliged to do so. It may happen that after one or more cards from his stock, he is able to dispose of his discard; or he may leave his discard as it is and turn up from his hand, playing perhaps alternately from these three places to his advantage.

The second player, like the first, must be careful to avoid having stops called on him by reason of his failure to play on the ace foundations when able to do so. If there are two identical cards available, he may take his choice, but he must play one or the other. Cards playable on the foundations may be in the tableau, the opponent's stock or discard, or turned up. A stop may be called as soon as a card which is playable on

the foundations has been placed elsewhere, even if the player is still touching it, provided he is not holding it. In the same way, if a card which is playable on the foundations is covered, or some other card is touched or turned up, establishing the oversight. If a card is turned up by the player in error when a stop is called on him, the cards remain as they are; but the card he turned goes back to the stock, as exposed, or back to the discard, or is turned face down again if it came from his hand, in each case returning to the part of the player's cards from which it came.

As soon as the stock of either player is exhausted, all further turning is done from his hand, until that is exhausted. If the last card of his hand is placed on his discard pile,

together with others already there, when it again becomes his turn to play he takes up the entire discard pile, and without disturbing the order of the cards, turns them face down. These cards now become his hand again, to be turned up one at a time, as before. Being no longer discards, but a new hand, these cards may now be played into spaces.

It sometimes happens that a player will inadvertently play a card in the wrong position, such as a red seven on a red eight, or a black eight on a red eight. In such cases, his opponent must immediately call attention to the error, and may insist on the card's being properly placed, if there is a position open for it. If not, it must be returned to the place in the tableau from which it came, or to the stock or the discard pile of

the player in error, if it was a turned card. There is no penalty for this error, but it must be corrected before another card is turned up by either player.

Players are not allowed to look at any of the unexposed cards in their hand or stock, under penalty of having a stop called on them; but a player may spread the cards on his own discard pile, which are all face up, provided he does not disturb their order. He cannot ask to see the extended discards of his adversary, unless that adversary extends them for his own information.

Before extending cards in this manner, either in the discards or in a sequence on the layout, the player must be careful to give notice that he is simply extending, and not playing, in case there is a card anywhere play-

able on the foundations, or he may have a stop called on him.

The player is allowed to turn up one card, either from his hand or stock, but not from both, before making any changes in the tableau. This allows him to judge better what plays to make, in case more than one opportunity offers.

In playing sequence and suit on the adversary's discard or stock, it is usually better to play in ascending sequence on his stock, and descending sequence on his discards, as this is the reverse of the order in which they must be got rid of, when the discards are turned into a hand again.

Scoring

The game is usually for so much a point. The first to get rid of

all his 52 cards wins the game and scores 30 points bonus. To this he adds 2 points for every card remaining in his adversary's stock, if any, face up or not, and 1 point more for each card remaining in his opponent's hand or discard pile.

Should either player wish to abandon the game at any stage he may do so by paying a forfeit of 20 points in addition to the usual 30 for a lost game, and by also paying for all the cards left in his stock, hand, or discard, at the usual rates.

The game must be declared a draw if it arrives at a stage at which neither player can get rid of all his cards, even if one should have a much larger number on hand than the other.

If a player exposes any playable card, either on his stock, discard pile,

or turned from his hand, and refuses to play it, perhaps in order to force a drawn game, he may be compelled to play that card. After the discards have been turned down once and run through again as a hand, they must again be turned down and constitute a hand for the second time. After a player has run through his hand for the third time in this manner, he must play any card that can be played. If the playable card is on his stock, he must play it after he has twice run through his hand and discards, so as to avoid the draw, if possible.

AN ILLUSTRATIVE HAND

ANY description of a game being always more easily understood if accompanied by examples from actual play, showing at least a part of the game, it is suggested that the reader take two packs of cards, with different colored backs, such as red and blue, and sort out the following hands, so as to follow the description which follows, step by step, seeing the reason for every card played, and also getting a better grasp on the application of the law governing stops, which is most important. For practice, nothing is better than the small patience cards, the U. S. Playing Card Co.'s No. 24, "Little Duke," being especially suitable.

Taking the red pack first, sort out thirty-two cards, which should be laid on the table, face up, in the following order, the first card in each row being the bottom card of that suit pile, such as the heart king. The "J" stands for Knave.

♡: K 5 J 7 4
♧: K 7 5 8 6 3 4 9 J A 2
◇: A 6 2 10 7 3
♤: K 2 5 3 6 7 9 A Q 8

With these four piles in front of you, take off the top cards from each pile, beginning with the spade eight, and making a single pile of them, but still face up: (Read from left to right.)

♤8, ♧2, ♤Q, ♧A, ♧J, ◇3, ◇7, ♧9, ♧4, ♡4, ◇10, ◇2, ♧3, ♡7, ♧6, ♤A, ◇6, ♧8, ♤9, ♧5, ♤7, ♤6, ♤3, ♧7, ◇A, ♤5, ♡J, ♤2, ♤K, ♡5, ♧K, ♡K.

Now turn these 32 cards face down, and leave them on the table until you have sorted out the blue pack.

From the blue pack sort out the following 24 cards, laying them on the table, face up, just as you did with the red pack, the heart six being the bottom card of the first pile.

♡: 6 Q K 9
♧: J Q 3 10
♢: 5 2 K 8 9 A 4 3 J
♤: K 4 9 6 Q 2 10

With these four piles in front of you take off the top cards from each pile, beginning with the spade ten, so as to make a single pile of them, all face up.

♤10, ♡9, ♧10, ♢J, ♢3, ♤2, ♢4, ♢A, ♢9, ♤Q, ♢8, ♡K, ♢K, ♢2, ♢5, ♤6, ♧3, ♤9, ♧Q, ♤4, ♤K, ♡Q, ♧J, ♡6.

Now turn these 24 cards face down, and deal off 12 cards from the top, one at a time, all face down, into a single pile on your right. These 12 cards will form the "stock" for the blue player.

Deal the next four cards on the table, face up, in a row, on a line between the two players. These four cards, if the sorting has been correctly done, will be found to be the king, deuce, five of diamonds, and six of spades. They form the blue pack's contribution to the "tableau." The remaining eight cards are laid on the table, face down, just as they are, and form the blue player's hand.

Turning to the red pack, the first 12 cards are dealt off, one at a time, and face down, to form the stock. The next four cards are dealt to the table, face up, in a row, parallel to

the four cards from the blue pack which are already on the table face up, but with enough space between the two rows to admit of two more rows, which will eventually be filled by the eight aces that form the foundations.

If the four cards from the red pack are the trey of clubs, seven of hearts, six of clubs and ace of spades, the sorting has probably been correctly done. The remaining 16 cards are laid on the table, face down, just as they are, and form the "hand" of the player with the red pack.

The layout should now present the appearance shown in Diagram No. 1.

Let us suppose that the player with the red pack won the preliminary cut, and has the right to play first. There are open to him four moves in the tableau, as it stands,

DIAGRAM No. 1

PLAYER WITH THE RED PACK TO PLAY

before turning a card from his stock. The first of these four is compulsory, and must be made before even touching another card, under penalty of having a stop called on him, and that is to put the ace of spades into place for a foundation. The remaining three moves are optional; but let us suppose they are made, and that no further changes being possible, the player is about to turn the top card from his stock. The layout will present the appearance shown in Diagram No. 2.

If the cards have been properly sorted, the top card of the red stock will be found to be the

♢ 2. As this does not fit anywhere, it must go into one of the spaces. The ♢ 10 and ♡ 4 fill two of the remaining spaces.

♣ 4 and ♣ 9 can both be played on descending sequences.

◇ 7 fills the last space. The ◇ 3 goes on the ♣ 4, but the ♣ J is unplayable and forms a stop, so far as the stock is concerned, so the player now turns his attention to his "hand," from which he turns up the top card. If the sorting has been properly done, this will be the

◇ 6, which cannot be played, and forms a stop. There is now a club jack on the top of the player's stock, and the six of diamonds lying face up, separate from his hand, and forming the beginning of his discard pile. It therefore becomes the turn of the player with the blue pack to play, with the layout as shown in Diagram No. 3.

Spaces being always most desirable, the first thing to be done is to

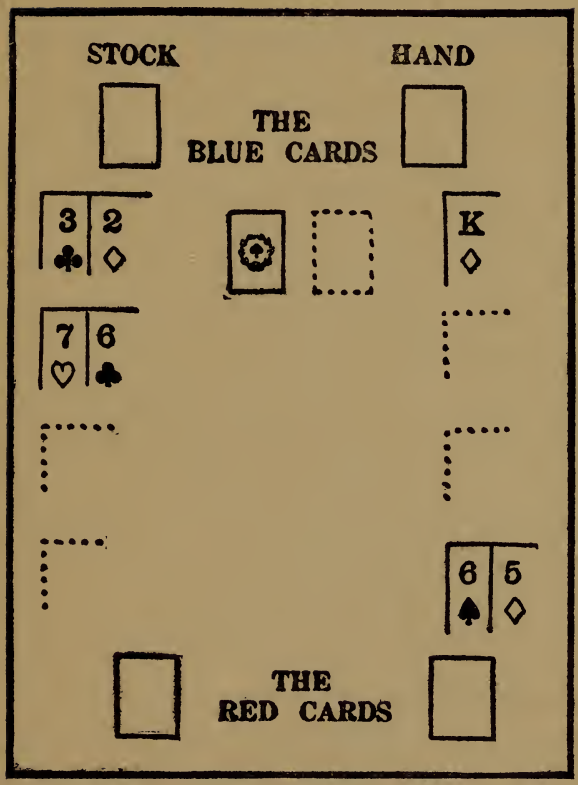

DIAGRAM No. 2

THE RED CARDS' TURN TO PLAY

place the seven of diamonds on his opponent's discard, as he can take it back again any time he wants it, as long as it is not covered. Beginning with his stock (the twelve cards on his right), he turns up the

♡ K, which goes into the space just made vacant by the removal of the seven of diamonds. The ◇ 8 goes on the ♧ 9, as it is usually better to continue a sequence whenever possible, in preference to building on an opponent's discard pile or stock. The ♤ Q goes on the ◇ K. He then turns the

◇ 9. This gives him a choice. He can let that card remain on the top of his stock, and turn his attention to his hand, or he can play the eight and nine of diamonds on his opponent's discard. Should he turn from his stock and be unable to play that

card, he could not return to his stock as that would be exposing two cards before determining on his play.

If he leaves the nine of diamonds on his stock, and turns from his hand a card that cannot be played, such as a king, he would be stopped, and his opponent would at once pile the eight, seven and six of diamonds on him. In order to avoid the possibility of having his stock blocked in this way with four cards, he puts the two diamonds on his opponent's discard pile, running it up to the nine. Continuing from his stock, he turns the

♢ A, which goes into a space at once, and on which he must be careful to play the deuce and trey of diamonds before touching another card. He can then put the ♧ 3 on the ♡ 4,

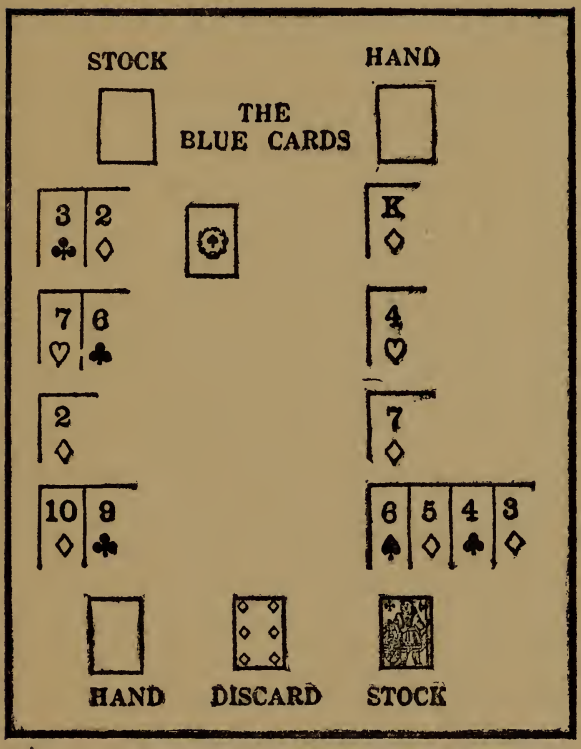

DIAGRAM No. 3

THE BLUE CARDS' TURN TO PLAY

and the other ♢ 2 on the ♧ 3, giving him two spaces. The

♢ 4, ♤ 2, ♢ 3, ♢ J, ♧ 10, ♡ 9

can all be played on the sequences. The ♤ 10, the last card of his stock, goes into a space. Before turning the spade ten, he might have used the two spaces to separate the ♢ 3 and ♧ 4, so as to get out the ♢ 5, but in case he lost the lead, that might give his opponent a chance to run off all his diamonds from his discard pile. As long as the ♢ 5 is not uncovered, it is not compulsory to play it on the foundations, and the player cannot be compelled to uncover it, if he does not wish to do so.

His stock being exhausted, the player turns the top card from his hand (the pile of cards remaining face down on his left). If the sort-

ing has been correctly done, this will be found to be the

♧ 3, which fills the last space. The next card is the

♤ 9, which is unplayable, and forms a stop, being placed at the right of the player's hand, to form the beginning of his discard pile. It is now the turn of the player with the red pack to take up the play again, the layout having the appearance shown in Diagram No. 4.

The first thing is to make a space by putting the ♤ 10 on the ♤ 9 in his opponent's discard pile, and the ♧ J from the top of his own stock into the space. Cards from the stock may always be played into spaces; but not cards from either of the discard piles. His stock being free, he proceeds to turn up these four cards:

♧ A, ♤ Q, ♧ 2, ♤ 8. The ace

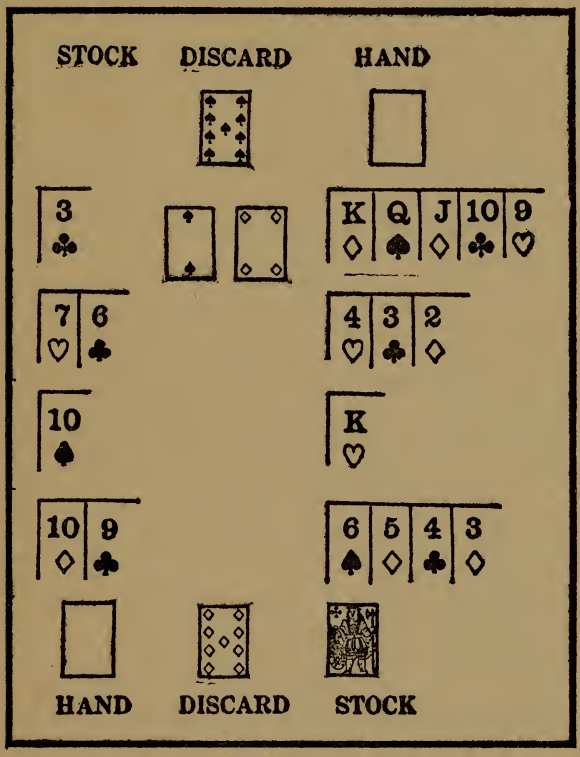

DIAGRAM No. 4

THE TURN OF THE RED CARDS TO PLAY

starts another foundation, in the row under the spade ace. It is usual for each player to keep his aces on the same side of the foundations, in order that he may know how many are to come from the red or the blue pack. The spade ace came from the red pack, so the club ace is put under it. The ♤ Q goes on the ♡ K, and the moment the ♧ 2 appears, it goes on the ace, and the ♧ 3 makes a space.

As a player is not allowed to fill spaces from the discard piles, he cannot put the ♤ 10 and ♢ 9 into the vacancy, but may fill it with the ♤ 8, the last card from his stock. This is better than putting it on his long sequence, as that might result in his turning a card which would be useful to his opponent, such as a black ten, which he would have to put into the space.

But he has a much better play than either, which is to utilize this space in separating the ♧ 6 and ♡ 7. Seeing that he can do this, he puts the ♤ 8 on the long sequence, and adds the ♡ 7 to ♧ 6 to it.

By separating the ♧ 9 and ♢ 10 in the same way, he rebuilds them on the ♧ J, leaving him three spaces. Now observe how he uses these spaces to dig out the ♡ 9 from his long sequence and replace it with the ♢ 9 from his discard pile.

First, he puts the 6, 7 and 8 each in a different space, then the 6 on the 7 and the ♡ 9 in the space. The ♤ 8 goes on the ♡ 9, separating the 6 and 7 again, and rebuilding them on the sequence. Observe that as only one card can be lifted at a time, there must be a space in order to move two cards from one place to

the end of a sequence in another place.

Now the player gets to work to clear off his discard pile, playing the ♢ 9 on the ♧ 10, the ♢ 8 on the ♧ 9. Then he uses one of the spaces to lift the ♢ 3 and put the ♧ 4 on one foundation, the ♢ 5 on the other. Having no card that he would be allowed to play into a space, he turns up from his hand the

♧ 8. Putting this on the long sequence, he gets the ♢ 7 off, and at once runs the diamond foundation up to the 8. By shifting the ♧ 8 into the space, he adds the ♢ 9. Then he turns up the top card of his hand and finds the

♤ 9. This is added to his opponent's discard pile. The

♧ 5 comes next. This runs the club foundation up to the 6. By

transferring the ♡ 7 to the ♧ 8, the ♤ 8 is added to his opponent's discard pile, and the ♡ 9 goes back to the long sequence, on the ♧ 10.

It is now feasible to separate the ♡ 7 and ♧ 8, adding them to the sequence; but a player must always look ahead, and it is not good policy to bury cards too deep that may be wanted shortly. Both jack and ten of diamonds are on the table, and can be dug out any time, as long as spaces are left, and spaces are very valuable. The next card turned is the

♤ 7. By adding this to his opponent's discard pile, and putting the ♤ 6 with it, he gets two spaces. It is now time to dig out the diamonds and clubs; but observe the manner in which this is done. Instead of the obvious play, taking out the ♢ 10

first, the ♢ J should be released, while there are spaces enough to manipulate.

First of all, two spaces are used to separate the ♧ 10 and ♡ 9, and join them again elsewhere. Now the ♧ 9 goes into the space, and the diamond foundation is run up to the jack. The next five cards can all be played. They are the

♤ 6, ♤ 3, ♧ 7, ♢ A, ♤ 5. The moment the ♢ A appears, it is built up to the trey, leaving a space. Now observe how the ♤ 5 is used. By putting it on the opponent's discard pile, the ♤ 6 can be added to it. The ♡ 7 goes into the space, and the club foundation built up to the nine. Moving the ♡ 9 to a space, runs the clubs to the jack, leaving three spaces. The next four cards turned are these:

♡ J, ♤ 2, ♤ K, ♡ 5. The ♡ J goes on the ♤ Q, where the long sequence was. The spades go into spaces; but when the ♡ 5 is turned, the ♤ 6 is taken from the opponent's discard pile and placed on the ♡ 7, so as to use the ♡ 5. Continuing, he turns the

♧ K, and ♡ K, both of which must be left, one in a space, the other as a discard. It now becomes the turn of the player with the blue cards, the layout having the appearance shown in Diagram No. 5.

There being no changes possible in the tableau, and no way of getting rid of the top card of his discard, he turns up from his hand the following cards in order:

♧ Q, ♤ 4, ♤ K, ♡ Q, ♧ J, ♡ 6.

The ♧ Q gives him a space and

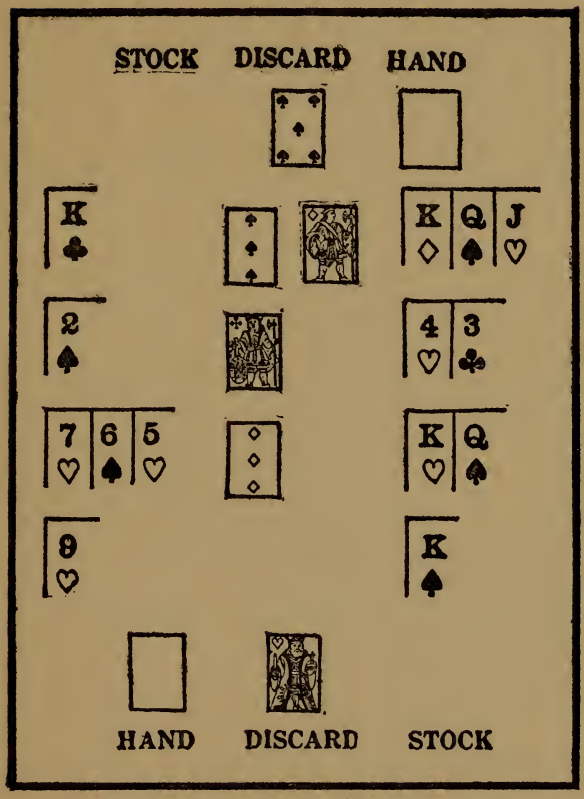

DIAGRAM No. 5

IT IS THE TURN OF THE BLUE CARDS TO PLAY

closes the club sequence, which may be turned down. The ♤ 4 releases all his discard pile at a stroke, up to the ♤ 9. The ♡ Q and ♧ J go on the ♤ K, but the ♡ 6 is a stopper, and must be placed on the top of the ♤ 9, in the discards.

This leaves the layout with the appearance shown in Diagram No. 6, it being the turn of the player with the red pack to play.

It is now the turn of the red cards to play, and the reader is advised to take the remaining twenty cards of this pack, lay them face down to the left, and turn them up one at a time as if they were a continuation of the hand. When it becomes the turn of the blue cards to play, do the same with the twenty-eight remaining in that pack.

All the cards sorted out being ex-

hausted, the reader may be left to play the remaining twenty red and twenty-eight blue, according to the way they happen to come, applying the principles given in the play so far.

It may also be interesting to sort out the original cards again, but to play them in a different way, which is easily possible, and may prove instructive. The way given is not selected as the best possible, but it has the required variations in the management of different situations, which it is the design of the author to illustrate.

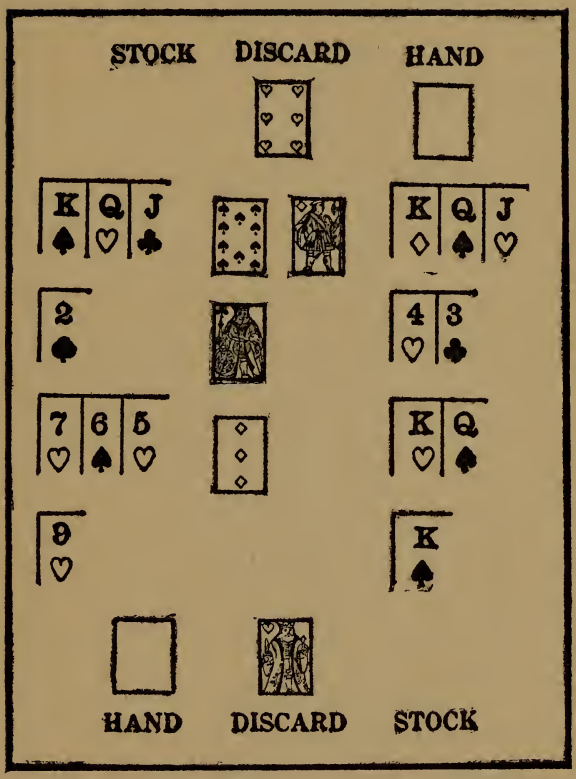

DIAGRAM No. 6

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